

# CHAPTER 15

## Education and Training Voucher Grant

### Overview

The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Grant is a federally-funded program to provide postsecondary education and training opportunities to students who are currently or who have been in foster care. Recipients must make satisfactory academic progress to receive awards. Awards are prorated for students enrolling less than full-time.

**Date Established:** 2004

### A. ELIGIBILITY

#### 1. College and University

Colleges and universities must meet the definition of 'institution of higher education' as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Colleges and universities may be located outside of Iowa.

#### 2. Student

To receive an ETV Grant, a student must have been:

- In a licensed foster care placement under a court order as described in Iowa Code chapter 232 under the care and custody of the Department of Human Services or Juvenile Court Services on the date the youth reached the age of 18 or during the 30 calendar days before or after that date;
- Under court order under Iowa Code chapter 232 to live with a relative or other suitable person on the date the youth reached the age of 18 or during the 30 calendar days before or after that date;
- In a licensed foster care placement under an order entered under Iowa Code chapter 232 prior to being legally adopted after reaching the age of 16; or,
- In a court-ordered Subsidized Guardianship after the age of 16.

In addition, the student must:

- Enroll or plan to enroll at an eligible college or university;
- Submit a FAFSA (and be eligible for Federal Student Aid);
- Complete the Iowa Financial Aid Application by December 1.

## **B. STUDENT APPLICATION PROCESS**

Students must file both the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Iowa Financial Aid Application to be eligible to receive the ETV Grant.

Students must be under the age of 21 the first time they submit an application and begin attending college. Students must re-apply each year to be considered for an annual award. Students can be funded until the age of 23 if the student received an award at age 21; and has been,

- Continuously enrolled in postsecondary education;
- Continuously receiving an ETV award;
- Maintaining satisfactory academic progress as defined by the eligible college or university.

## **C. SELECTION OF RECIPIENTS**

Awards will first be made to returning students who submit applications by the March 1 priority deadline. Once all on-time renewal applications are awarded, new applications and late renewal applications will be considered in date-received order. If all eligible applicants cannot be funded by July 1, priority will be given to undergraduate students in date-received order. If all undergraduate applicants have been funded by July 1, graduate students on the wait-list may be awarded in date-received order.

Once funds have been committed for an academic year, any unfunded applicants will be added to a waiting list based on the date and time the Iowa Financial Aid Application was received.

## **D. AWARD AMOUNTS AND LIMITS**

All ETV Grant recipients are eligible to receive awards of up to \$5,000 per year based on the student's enrollment status. Students enrolled less than full-time can receive pro-rated ETV awards. These awards are not subject to the Commission's gift aid regulations (Chapter 2), as the award can cover a recipient's EFC.

Students are eligible to receive ETV in the summer term, as long as the maximum award has not been exhausted during the preceding academic year. Summer award amounts will mirror the proration schedule below, but the student cannot receive more than \$5,000 in ETV funds over the course of the preceding academic year and summer.

**Proration for semester schools:**

	Award per semester
Full-time 12+ hours	\$2,500
Three-quarter time 9, 10, 11 hours	\$1,875
Half-time 6, 7, 8 hours	\$1,250
Less-than-half-time 3, 4, 5 hours	\$ 625

**Proration for quarter schools:**

	Award per quarter
Full-time 12+ hours	\$1,667; \$1,667; \$1,666
Three-quarter time 9, 10, 11 hours	\$1,250
Half-time 6, 7, 8 hours	\$834; \$833; \$833
Less-than-half-time 3, 4, 5 hours	\$417; \$416; \$416

The highest award amount corresponding to an enrollment level (if multiple, shown in the chart above) should be awarded in the student's initial term of enrollment for that academic year.

Eligibility for assistance under this program ends when the student reaches the age of 23. If the student reaches age 23 by July 1 prior to the academic year for which they have applied for ETV funding, that student will not be considered eligible for that academic year.

Payments are disbursed on a per term basis and may be used by college or university officials to pay tuition, fees, books and room and board charges. If credit balances remain after charges are paid, college or university officials may distribute grant balances to students. Students must use the proceeds for other bona fide education expenses such as books, equipment, and transportation.

**E. AWARD NOTIFICATION**

The Commission will provide award notices to ETV Grant recipients. Award notices will clearly indicate award maximums.

## **F. RENEWAL ELIGIBILITY**

Students must complete and file annual FAFSAs and Iowa Financial Aid Applications for the ETV Grant by the deadline established by the Commission. If funds remain available after the application deadline, the Commission will continue to accept applications. To be eligible for a renewal award, a student must maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by the college or university (verified by college/university administrators).

## **G. CHANGES/CORRECTIONS**

Any changes in awards must be provided to Commission staff electronically via the State Scholarship and Grant Reporting System (see Chapter 3 and Appendix A).

## **H. VERIFICATION/COMPLIANCE**

College officials are responsible for completing required federal verification procedures and for coordinating all aid to ensure that all aid awarded, in conjunction with an ETV award, is within the college/university cost of attendance.

For students selected for federal verification, one disbursement of Commission-administered student financial aid may be made prior to completing the verification process as long as college or university officials have no reason to believe application information is inaccurate. If students become ineligible for aid due to verification activities, refunds must be made to Commission-administered programs.

## **I. ADDITIONAL OUT-OF-STATE COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY COMPLIANCE**

### **Responsibilities:**

Financial aid administrators overseeing Commission-administered student financial aid programs are responsible for:

- Reviewing applicant information for accuracy, completeness, and reasonableness;
- Clarifying questionable information and documenting resolutions;
- Documenting changes in Expected Family Contributions (EFCs);
- Resolving discrepancies between application information on need analysis reports and verification documentation;

- Updating and correcting applicant information electronically through the CPS or by requesting that students resubmit SARs with corrected information;
- Providing award information to students;
- Ensuring that enrollment verification forms accurately reflect the student's enrollment in specified terms;
- Ensuring scholarship payments from the Commission accurately reflect the college disbursements made throughout the academic year;
- Ensuring overpayments are refunded to the Commission in accordance with the State Refund Procedures, as detailed later in this chapter.

### **Calculating Refunds and Refund Procedures:**

If a student withdraws<sup>1</sup> before the end of a term after receiving state financial aid payments, the percentage calculated under the college or university's formula<sup>2</sup> for return of funds to the student must be used to calculate the state refund amounts. For example: If, when using the college or university's refund policy, officials determine that a 20 percent refund is required, then 20 percent of each state award also must be refunded to the state program from which the funds originally were received.

When state funds must be returned, payment must be made within 30 days of the final reconciliation of the Scholarship and Grant System or within 30 days of the date that college or university officials learn that funds must be returned, whichever is later. The payment must be accompanied by a list of recipients for whom refunds are being provided. The list must include each student's name, amount of the individual refund, name of the state aid program to which funds are being returned, and the applicable award period (academic year).

College and university officials may **round down** all refunds to the whole dollar amount. Examples: \$625.30 may be rounded down to \$625.00; \$785.97 may be rounded down to \$785.00.

### **Overpayment Procedures:**

Students determined to have been ineligible for Commission-administered programs due to student error or fraud, such as understating family income, must repay all funds. When college or university officials determine that students owe repayments, they must:

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<sup>1</sup> This policy stands regardless of whether the student withdraws from one course, multiple courses, or all courses for which the student was enrolled in for that term.

<sup>2</sup> This formula could be the tuition refund policy used by the business office, the Return of Title IV funds policy, or an institutional financial aid refund policy.

- a) Immediately cancel future financial aid payments for programs administered by the Commission.
- b) Notify the Commission of the cancellation.
- c) Consider the students ineligible for Commission-administered programs until repayment is complete or satisfactory repayment arrangements have been made with, and confirmed by, the Commission.

Commission staff will determine and oversee any further action.

### **Maintenance of Individual Student Records:**

Individual student records must be maintained by college and university officials for all students who receive awards from programs administered by the Commission. These records, which are generally located in the financial aid office, must include:

- a) Aid application need analysis reports;
- b) Documentation for any adjustments to students' records;
- c) Award letters (or copies), if awards are offered;
- d) Verification of each student's enrollment and satisfactory academic progress;
- e) Resolved verification requests;
- f) Withdrawal and refund information; and
- g) Items listed under the section titled "Recordkeeping and Disclosure" in The Federal Student Financial Aid Handbook;
- h) Documents used in a residency determination, if applicable.

All student financial aid records must reconcile with student accounting records and must include documentation for any changes to the initial award amounts.

Verification of information is required by the Commission for all students for whom verification is required by the federal Department of Education.

Accounting records and individual students' records are to be retained for three years from the end of the award years in which students last attended the college or university or until any audit questions have been resolved.